

## THE PROCESS



## MILWAUKEE'S DOWNTOWN VISION

### INTRODUCTION

The Downtown Planning Process began in spring of 1997. The process began with interviews of elected officials, business and educational leaders and neighborhood associations. These interviews introduced the consultants to a range of perceptions regarding the local conditions. Interviewees identified the most critical problems and recent successes in Downtown. With this base the consultant team began fieldwork for the Public Visioning Process. They walked and drove every street to examine the existing conditions. Fieldwork included a low-level flight to examine the pattern created by the parks, streets, buildings and surface parking lots. All conditions were professionally analyzed and photo-documented. Professional review of this data began with mapping these conditions. Next a Visual Preference Survey™ composed of local images, alternative from other locations and simulations was constructed. A demographic and policy questionnaire supplemented the images.

The public attended Visual Preference Survey™ sessions between October 1997 and January 1998; the results of these surveys generated the visual character for future development. In March 1998 the public participated in Vision Translation Workshops; the workshop exercises identified where the preferred images would be appropriately located. The professional team synthesized the public input for one week. The professional workshop included meetings with City and County staff and Elected Officials. Draft concept plans were presented and critiqued. A Concept Plan was presented to the public at the culmination of the professional workshop.

The planning process continued with strategies to implement the plan. In meetings with the Mayor and City staff, and the advisory committee and task force, priority actions were articulated. Refined plans were presented and critiqued. Another concept plan was presented to the original group of interviewees in August 1998. Staff critique helped to shape the final draft document. In addition, plans separately developed for the North Harbor, SummerFest and the Third Ward have been incorporated into the final document.

### Proposed Condition



## THE VISIONING PROCESS

### THE VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY™

The Visual Preference Survey™ (VPS™) is a planning technique, that brings residents, architects, planners, business owners and community leaders together to discuss and plan for the future. The VPS™ process allows members of a community to develop a consensus vision as to what they would like their community to look and feel like in the future. The Visual Preference Survey™ is an important part of the community involvement phase of Milwaukee's Downtown Plan. The Visual Preference Survey™ was administered for three and one-half months in large and small public meetings and on the Internet. Over 1,600 people participated.

The 230 images that made up the survey were chosen in order to measure participants' preferences of future land use forms and transportation-related issues. The images included in the survey were predominantly of Downtown Milwaukee. The images below illustrate the preferred future image and character for Downtown Development.



Highest Rated Image



Some of the Highest Rated Images



## THE VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY (cont.)

The participants in the Visual Preference Survey viewed images and rated them as they were appropriate and desirable or inappropriate and undesirable for Downtown Milwaukee. The participants' ratings of the images were compiled and evaluated to determine the types and styles of development that would be most appealing to Milwaukeeans. The resulting catalog of positive images is not meant to be slavishly copied. Instead, the images indicate traits of proportion, scale, form, and mix of activity that should be incorporated in Downtown development. These positive traits have been used in crafting the recommendations of this plan.

## COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

The Participants in the VPS also completed a questionnaire that provided demographic information as well as policy, travel, and market data. For example, participants indicated that they are willing to come downtown for...

<b>81%</b>	Movies and entertainment
<b>76%</b>	Cafes
<b>72%</b>	Gourmet restaurants
<b>68%</b>	Open space and parks
<b>56%</b>	Bars and clubs

## VISION TRANSLATION WORKSHOP

The Vision Translation Workshops were widely advertised and open to the public. Over three days, approximately 300 participants worked together using base maps, the results of the VPS, technical information, and their own insights. They identified where development should occur and the type of redevelopment it should be, whether residential, park/open space, office, industrial, mixed-use or entertainment. They were asked to recommend changes to the downtown transportation system.





## SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE MAP

The Susceptibility to Change Map became the base map used during the Vision Translation Workshops and the Professional Synthesis that followed the workshops.

The process of creating the Susceptibility to Change Map began with an examination of the built environment between Fall 1997 and Spring 1998. Every building and lot was visually inspected. Inspection criteria included: occupancy, architectural condition, and maintenance. Conditions were recorded on a base map that identified the footprint of every building, park, plaza, vacant lot, parking lot, parking deck, curb cut, and street right-of-way. These field notes were transferred onto the computerized base map and reviewed by City staff and The Advisory Committee. After their review, corrections were made and a final base map was prepared. The map indicates the permanence, development and or redevelopment potential for all Downtown properties.

### SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE STATISTICS

1,097 Acres in Downtown

**298 Acres Highly Susceptible to Change**

58 Acres Moderately Susceptible to Change

741 Acres with Low Susceptibility to Change



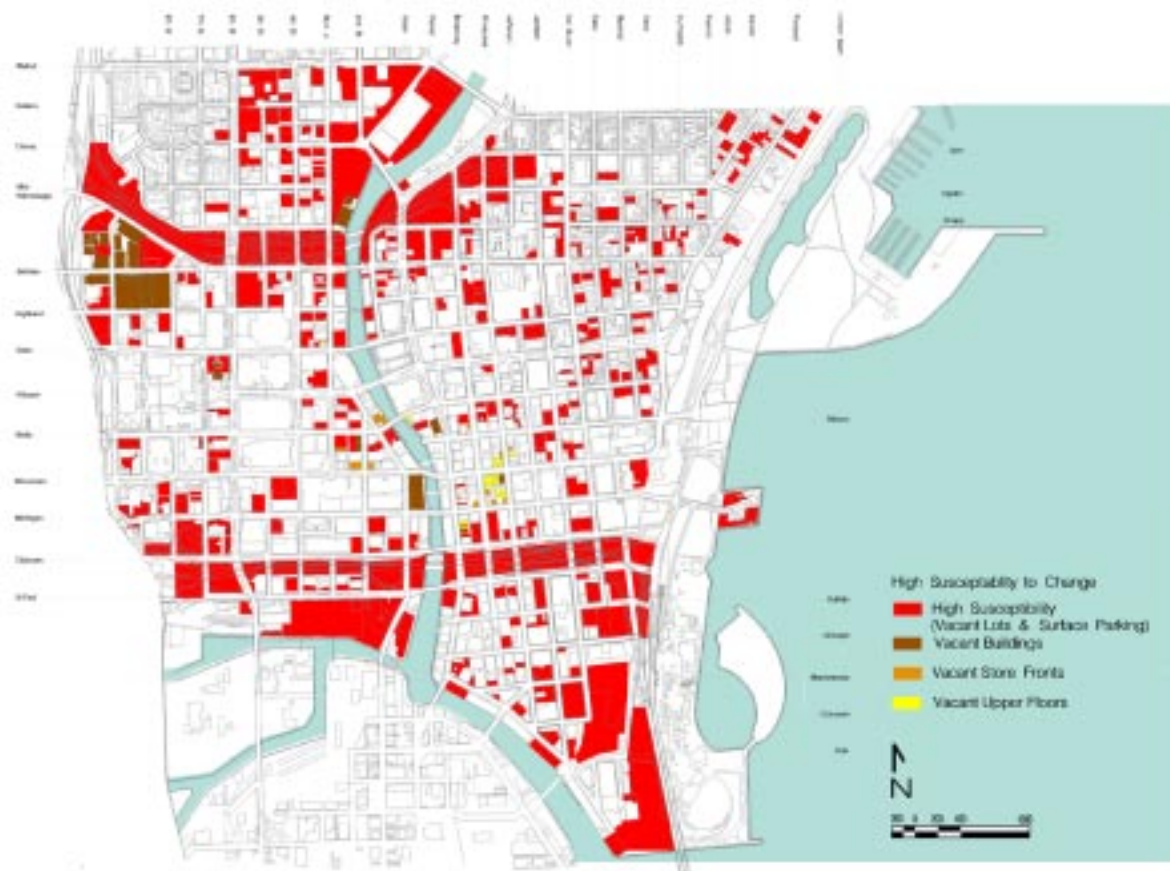
Susceptibility to Change Map



## VISION TRANSLATION WORKSHOP

This map identifies those areas on which new infill development should occur. Much of this land is currently used for surface parking. This land provides a great development resources for Downtown. By efficiently using existing underutilized parking structures, designing a more mixed-use Downtown and introducing convenient and inexpensive mobility options, more land becomes available for more intensive uses. In total there are 298 acres which are highly susceptible to change. The largest contiguous parcels are located under and adjacent to the U.S. 145/Park East Freeway, and I-794, the area immediately adjacent to the Summerfest grounds, and the area surrounding the Post Office.

Vacant buildings in good structural condition are a resource for Downtown. The largest concentration of these vacant buildings exists in the northwestern section in the former Pabst Brewery complex. The opportunity now exists for redevelopment of this important group of buildings. Offices, light industrial uses, loft housing, live-work units, housing and localized retail are potential uses.



High Susceptibility to Change Map

## WORKSHOP RESULTS AND POLICY ISSUES

The teams of participants dealt with policy issues regarding the Downtown development pattern in a strongly consistent manner.

**Appropriate mix of land-use activity:** The participants indicated that Downtown should be diverse, with a wide range of activities present. Participants indicated that housing, in new or renovated buildings, is appropriate in nearly all parts of Downtown near the river or the lake. Participants endorsed housing in mixed-use developments, above stores or offices and in lofts and other live-work developments.

**Appropriate mix of transportation:** The participants desired a transportation system that emphasizes local access and pedestrian circulation. Nearly all teams called for Downtown streets to be two-way. All agreed that many major destinations are beyond convenient walking distance and that a local transit link service Downtown is necessary. The participants endorsed further enhancements to encourage walking such as distinctive crosswalks and streetscapes, the completion of the RiverWalk system throughout the Downtown and connections to the lakefront. Every team removed at least one freeway segment. Participants provided parking within buildings as part of developments rather than stand-alone structure or surface lots.

**Appropriate intensity of activity:** Participants filled in nearly all the vacant and underdeveloped space on the base map with buildings. Rather than create new large areas of open space, the teams emphasized enhancing the existing streets with trees and plantings. Small parks were provided to complement new housing developments. Participants welcomed facilities such as sport, cultural and entertainment venues that attract visitors to downtown and add evening and weekend activity.

## PROFESSIONAL SYNTHESIS

Immediately following the workshops, the consultants began with the participants' ideas. In the first week, they produced a "concept" plan that was a compendium of the workshop results. The concept plan then underwent a lengthy review and refinement process to establish the validity of the final plan.

